

9/11 Health Bill Passes Key House Panel

Tuesday, 25 May 2010

Washington, D.C. - Today, U.S. Reps. Carolyn Maloney, Jerrold Nadler, Peter King, Michael McMahon, Eliot Engel, Anthony Weiner, José E. Serrano, and Joseph Crowley applauded the House Energy and Commerce Committee's passage of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, legislation that would provide comprehensive health care and compensation for the first responders and survivors who are sick because of the 9/11 attacks.

The House Energy and Commerce panel, which voted [to] in favor of the legislation, has jurisdiction over the Zadroga Act's provisions to expand and make permanent existing federal programs to provide medical monitoring for those exposed to toxins released by the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, and treatment for 9/11-related illnesses and injuries. In March, the House Health Subcommittee approved those provisions with bipartisan support. Last July, the House Judiciary Committee approved also with bipartisan support the bill's provisions to reopen the federal Victim Compensation Fund.

"The Zadroga Act just cleared its toughest hurdle so far, to the relief of thousands of Americans who lost their health because of 9/11 and desperately need help," Maloney said. "The New York-area Congressional delegation put in long hours to make this victory happen, especially my good friends and Energy and Commerce Committee members Eliot Engel, Anthony Weiner, and Frank Pallone. We've now had three key votes in the House in favor of the bill, and with each one the Zadroga Act has gathered new momentum. We look forward to bringing this bill to a vote on the House floor in the coming weeks."

"Today's successful Energy and Commerce vote is a major victory for the responders and survivors who have waited so long for health care, compensation and justice," said Rep. Nadler. "After considerable struggle, we have finally arrived at the final step in our legislative efforts. Let us now bring our bill to the House floor and provide 9/11 responders and survivors what is owed to them."

"Those brave individuals caught in the dust cloud on 9/11 need constant monitoring as health conditions resulting from exposure continue to arise and develop," said Rep. King. "I applaud the Committee for moving this bill one step closer to becoming law and providing the survivors and first responders the care and compensation they deserve."

"This year, we need more than just speeches and tributes. We need concrete action by Congress to give our 9/11 heroes, such as, Martin Fullam a 30-year veteran FDNY lieutenant from Staten Island, the health care and compensation they need and deserve. I commend the Energy and Commerce Committee for their hard work in taking this critical step to move the bill closer to the House floor. I, along with my colleagues from New York, will continue our fight to ensure that H.R. 847 makes its way to the President's desk this year," said Rep. McMahon.

"September 11 was a tragedy not just for New York, but for the entire nation. However, despite the terrible attacks and the loss of life, that day, and the days which followed, also provided examples of bravery and national pride which were inspiring. Within minutes of the attack, New York's first responders mobilized to save those trapped in the World Trade Center, putting their lives in unspeakable danger, with sadly, far too many of them giving their own lives. Within days, over 40,000 responders from around the country came to Ground Zero to help. Americans rose up in our hour of need, and now it is long overdue for Congress to come to aid of first responders, their families, and the people from the neighborhood of the attack whose health has deteriorated badly over the years," said Rep. Engel, a senior member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and co-sponsor of the legislation. "We cannot help those that are already lost, but we can help the thousands who are sick. We must do what is right and show them that their selflessness is shared by the rest of the nation. This legislation will accomplish that and I plan to continue working to have it eventually passed by the full House. I look forward the day when President Obama signs this legislation into law."

"Today we cleared an important hurdle to care for the thousands of New Yorkers who responded to the terrorist attacks of September 11th. We have a responsibility to care for the heroes who risked their lives on that tragic day and the survivors. We owe it to them to make them whole and keep them well, and that is what this bill does," said Rep. Weiner.

"The Energy and Commerce Committee honored all our 9/11 responders today as they voted to include everyone that helped in the aftermath. We owe all those who helped us at Ground Zero our support and I'm proud to have been part of the effort to make sure their health concerns are properly taken care of. The 9/11 attacks brought our nation together and we should not let the passage of time allow us to become divided on questions related to that awful day," said Congressman Serrano.

"Today is a great day for all those who risked their lives to save others and restore our city after the 9/11 terrorist attack," said Congressman Crowley. "While the work is not finished, Congress is one step closer to fulfilling its commitment to those who suffered as a result of their heroic efforts. I am proud to have worked alongside my colleagues from New York in pushing this measure forward, and I will keep working to ensure we never take for granted those who so valiantly served our nation on September 11th."